THE AKRON CIVIC THEATRE: A DIGITAL PRESENCE

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THE AKRON CIVIC THEATRE: A DIGITAL PRESENCE

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ABSTRACT

This practical thesis discusses the considerations, planning efforts, and implementation process needed to create an online branding marketing video for a nonprofit arts organization. The goals are to sell the organization, its values and culture, build online brand awareness, drive customers to the website, and inform purchase intent. The final product is a short two minute and thirty second digital marketing video to be used to benefit the organization in its current marketing position. The commercial-like video captures the essence and values of The Akron Civic Theatre’s brand and aligns with the current and future goals of the organization. The message of the video tells the evolving story of the organization and offers a fun, inviting, and personal connection with the venue by showcasing the versatile space and highlighting organizational leaders. The content broadens and advances the organization’s digital online presence and communicates that the community can use the versatile space for purposes other than programmatic entertainment.
DEDICATION

To those who have vision, passion, and drive.
May you work to push the boundaries of current practice to create the future.
No one will do it for you but there are many willing to help.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks go to those who supported me in my work and provided encouragement throughout the creative process. This notable part of my journey has been positively shaped by my goal-oriented family, friends, and colleagues.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The project and research reported in this thesis have been targeted to benefit community nonprofit arts organizations. Be mindful that the content discussed can be used to benefit similar sized organizations with the consideration that the local and online resources available will vary. This chapter discusses current shifts in marketing practices from traditional to new media tools and online brand building. It also introduces the Akron Civic Theatre as the focus for this thesis and highlights its history, current marketing position, and suggests a message for an online video.

The Internet has created another dimension of marketing where a nonprofit organization must not only manage business and maintain its physical space but also nurture its online identity. An online brand identity, or the way an organization represents itself, needs to remain fresh, effective, and on message if it is to continue to connect with clients and attract customers. Arvidsson states in *Brands: Meaning and Value in Media Culture* that “... brands have become an important tool for transforming everyday life into economic value” (Introduction). To communicate a good story about an organization with a lasting motivational message, needs of the brand are to be addressed, tone
established, a message prioritized, and words and images selected (Holland 101). The essence and values of the brand should be conveyed through the “style and tone of the piece” (101). Visual components such as company logos, selected fonts, and colors, are “... just as important as text of an organization” (101) and help reinforce and strengthen the brand (13). These features create the online brand identity and should be consistent with the design and essence of the organization.

Shift in Marketing and Advertising Procedure

The American population accesses information in more diversified ways than in previous years due to the combination of the growing individualistic society and personal use of technology. Habits of people have changed. They do not seek outside entertainment as part of their experience as much as they once did. A growing number of organizations are developing an online presence and now have the ability to use new marketing tools to reach a broader audience. This online audience can range further in physical proximity from the organization, increasing the market base for the venue without saturating the existing markets targeted with traditional marketing tactics.

As stated by Frelinghuysen & Joshi in Bain & Company’s media and technology study, *In Search of a Premium Alternative*, “... future growth prospects [of online advertising] appear robust” (1). They forecast that “... revenues will grow at an average annual rate of 12 percent between 2010 and 2014” (1). Currently, the majority of advertising dollars are not being directed to online practices. They also state that “over the next three years, brand marketers expect nearly 40 percent of their ad budget to be spent on integrated,
cross-platform campaigns” (8), which will combine online and offline marketing components.

**Traditional Versus New Marketing Tools**

The traditional way of marketing such as newspaper press releases, magazine articles, and television news coverage, now compete for the quickly changing audiences who go online for current events and daily consumption of information. The traditional techniques that were successful in the past will be increasingly less effective in the future. With the growing popularity of internet users and online information seekers, it is critical for nonprofit arts organizations to have a digital presence for their continued operation and future success. Organizations that have shifted online have the ability to communicate ongoing messages to their online audience using new marketing tools. This new wave of marketing spreads messages creatively online through various ways such as videos, blogs, discussion boards, websites, and many more.

Recent online video and marketing trends show increased organizational interest and advertising promise. Videos are being used to build brand awareness, drive customers to websites, educate consumers, generate future transactions, and increase profits for organizations. According to a market study conducted by Yellow Pages, “consumers are using online video ads to help make purchasing decisions” (qtd. by Marijana 1). The data shows that online advertising attracts customers. Yellow Pages also reported that, “eighty percent of web users have watched a video ad online, fifty-two percent took action after viewing the ad, fifteen percent visited the store, and twelve percent made a purchase” (1).
“Because of its interactive nature, online video is fast becoming one of the most effective tools to acquire and convert new customers” (Marijana 1).

America’s individualistic society fosters a culture where many have their own personal digital devices, computers, Internet, and a drive to be online for many reasons. These individuals have their own television, DVD player, and access to a wide variety of sources of entertainment and instant information. Online gaming, social networking, and on-demand programming are drawing customers away from presenting arts organizations and competing for the satisfaction of this population’s entertainment needs. It is for these reasons, nonprofit arts organizations need an online brand presence with strategically positioned messages to attract customers and continue to succeed.

For a presenting organization, such as The Akron Civic Theatre, fresh continuous messages need to be broadcasted to keep the attention of its online audience. Messages need to convey easily accessible information to satisfy customer needs and desires. By incorporating new marketing tools, such as video, to a website or online publication, audiences would be attracted to interact with the organizations and more likely return in the future.

As organizations and audiences shift online, new marketing practices are quickly being developed and tested, resulting in a multitude of advertising options. This is one barrier to online marketing and brand building that hinders organizations from joining the online marketing trend. Considering this limitation, it becomes difficult to compare the effectiveness of online to traditional marketing medium. According to Frelinghuysen & Joshi, “... marketers recognized that the Web is inherently more interactive and can
address a broader set of marketing needs. But despite the immense potential for online advertising, the current reality falls short” (2).

*Online Brand Building*

Marketers rely on tracking metrics to determine if money spent on a campaign has return on investment. Online tracking can measure such things as “click-throughs to page views, to unique visitors” (4) can be valuable for direct response advertising but do not provide enough useful information to help marketers working to develop a brand. However, Larry Weber states in his book excerpt, *12 Steps to the Interactive Future*, that online brand building is “… about being more transparent, earning trust [and] building credibility” (1). A brand is a living thing and in the new marketing reality, “the brand is based on the dialogue … with customers and prospects …” (2). “The brand has become iconic because it is an indispensable part of everyday life for anyone who uses a computer” (2). Organizations are gauging their “… brand equity not by static measurements … but by dynamic measures such as customer word-of-mouth” (2). This is why it is important for administrators to understand the potential online brand building can have on an organization.

*The Akron Civic Theatre*

The Akron Civic Theatre is one of six remaining atmospheric theatres in the United States of America. It is located at 182 Main Street, Akron, Ohio.
Following is a typical description of atmospheric theatres:

An atmospheric theatre is a type of movie palace which has an auditorium ceiling that is intended to give the illusion of an open sky as its defining feature. The decorative and architectural elements often convey an impression of being seated in a fantastic foreign setting, which might be anything from a palace or village square to a garden or an outdoor amphitheatre at night. The interior structure of the Civic was fashioned after a Moorish castle featuring Mediterranean decor, including medieval carvings, authentic European antiques, and Italian alabaster sculptures. (Wikipedia 1)

Originally called the Loew’s Theatre, it opened its doors in 1929 as a for-profit movie house and was used as a place to present vaudeville acts (Zaidan and Ramsthaler 6). After more than eighty years of changes in the local economy, community, and downtown audiences, the theatre now functions as a nonprofit presenting arts organization and is located on the last block of old buildings to be developed in the downtown area. Its mission is “to provide quality entertainment to diverse audiences” (Parr, 16 Feb.). It offers a range of programming options from family and cabaret shows, international and cultural entertainment, to large stage commercial productions and has a growing number of shows and events each year. The venue is also available to the public and community for rent for other functions such as special events, parties, and weddings.

The Civic continues to evolve to sustain itself. As competition for live entertainment has resulted in a decrease in ticket sales for many arts organizations, arts organizations like the Civic, are faced with developing new strategies to attract audiences to increase
revenue in order to sustain their operations. The focus of programmatic marketing is to attract a targeted audience to the organization for a specific cause; whereas the focus of institutional marketing is on the values and image of the organization to advance its current market position. The Civic Theatre brand is currently positioned as a family oriented and community venue that presents shows but it is also available to the public for rental opportunities. It is a goal of the administration to make better use the space for private events, without blocking out dates when concerts or shows could likely be scheduled. The programmatic marketing efforts of the venue are satisfactorily being communicated. It is the use of its versatile space the administration wishes to grow that is discussed in this project.

It is the intent of this thesis to fill a need and benefit the Civic by developing a practical marketing video to communicate the message about the use of its versatile space to an online targeted audience. Programmatic messages about scheduled events and upcoming shows are being communicated through traditional and new media tools. The traditional tools include print ads, such as magazine ads and newspaper articles and outdoor advertisement. New media tools being used include digital newsletters, social network site messages, and messages on the Civic’s website. These tools can also be used to further the message about the versatile space by posting or linking the video to their website. However, this thesis will discuss the considerations, planning efforts, and implementation process needed to create an online branding video for a nonprofit arts organization.
CHAPTER II

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Community resources were consulted to narrow down the scope of the project and determine the feasibility for an online branding video for the Akron Civic Theatre. Research and information was collected to focus the content of the video. The information gathered about online marketing, branding, and video production confirmed that this type of marketing tool would be appropriate and useful for the Civic to advance its current position. In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of my research and the process involved to set the message, target audience, and other content components of the video.

The Civic was selected as the subject for this project for multiple reasons. Foremost, it has served as a community landmark since 1929 and is located in downtown Akron, Ohio. The City of Akron used to have a thriving manufacturing economy but is now in an area of industrial decline, in a region commonly known as the Rust Belt. In many cases downtown development in Rust Belt cities have lost many of the amenities they enjoyed in better economic times, and are at risk of losing commercial tenants, which leads to vacant, and in some cases abandoned buildings. Having a nonprofit community arts
organization such as the Civic creates diverse entertainment options for individuals and cultural and international communities. High-quality arts and cultural entertainment options not only create an aura of culture, which elevates the general perception of a city, they also play a vital role in creating an attractive quality of life, encouraging resident retention, and attracting families and businesses to the area. As Kristin Tarajack stated in *Challenges and Opportunities in Rust Belt Cities*, “... this group of (cultural) amenities may be essential in improving the Rust Belt’s competitive position” (9).

Next, its physical entrance on Main Street consists of one storefront which does not successfully represent the grandeur or beauty of the venue. The marquee and entryway are attractive and speak to the class of historical theatres of which it is a part, but unless someone has had a previous experience inside the venue, the visual information currently available, both physical and online would not be enough to attract them through the doors. The final reason the Civic was selected is due to the fact that it is now run as a nonprofit and it is imperative that the community play an active role in keeping the historical building vital and the organization functioning. It is hoped that the final product created through this project would benefit the Civic, the city, and the region by showcasing the importance of video in online branding for smaller arts organizations.

**Research and Data Collection**

Primary data was collected through a series of personal face-to-face interviews which were conducted throughout the length of the project with the executive director and head house manager/volunteer coordinator. An initial meeting was held with the executive
director to determine a need and feasibility of a video for the venue and find how the story of the organization was evolving. Current challenges were communicated and a discussion developed about how a project of this nature could be helpful to the organization. Questions about the current standing of the operation, challenges, successful programs and events, and satisfaction of overall audience response and attendance were discussed. A second meeting included the head house manager/volunteer coordinator and focused on the current marketing and branding goals. It was at this meeting where potential messages for the video were discussed. Both administrators were interested in the project, agreed to play a role, and were forthcoming with information related to the organization.

Secondary data was collected through observation of practices inside the venue and internal reports and documents such as, the economic impact figures, online patron survey results, and organizational pamphlets. In the book, *Branding for Nonprofits*, author D.K. Holland recommends, getting “an inside perspective of the organization” (21) and involving the administration in the development process. To get an inside perspective, the producer of the piece “... must be able to tell their story, with them involved” (21). This perspective was attained by my seeking and filling an internal position as an intern to gain a better understanding of the operations of the organization. Through observation and communication with the administration, staff, and volunteers, this experience showcased the working infrastructure, prioritized the need for the video, and highlighted the importance of the message.
According to the ACT [Akron Civic Theatre] Overview (see APPENDIX A and B), “... an internal report [was] used in the fiscal year 2008-09, primarily as a way of communicating the strategic direction to community leadership and funding sources”:

The facility is held in extremely high regard by the general public (many of whom have deep emotional ties to the building) and its appeal crosses racial and economic boundaries. Like the Library and the Zoo, the Civic is perceived as an important community asset by a broad cross-section of the public. More than 100,000 people visit the Civic annually, nearly half (48,000) under the age of 18.

Since 2000, the community has invested more than $30 million in the Civic to support its renovation and operations. The theatre serves as an anchor for the development of the Lock 3 block of Main Street and its presence and operation facilitated, along with the City of Akron, the launch and increasing success of Lock 3 Park, and the ongoing development at Lock 4. (ACT Overview 1)

This document informed the objectives set by the administration and Board of Trustees. It also stated that, “... while earned and contributed revenue directly associated with rental and in-house events at the Civic are sufficient to support its programming, they are not sufficient to fund the basic operating costs of the building itself” (ACT Overview 1). It proposed a programming and operational model for the theatre and included a list of objectives and ways they would be achieved.

Some objectives included:

• An increase in the number of events at the building, and increased public awareness of those events.
• An increase in revenue from ticket sales, rental fees, concessions, special events, and public (city, county, state) and private sector (individuals, foundations, corporations) support. (1)

These objectives would be achieved by:

• Maintaining relationships with and providing excellent service to current rental clients.
• Managing risk associated with in-house programming offered by the Civic and designed to keep the building active on dates when no rental events are scheduled. (1)

**Current Challenges**

To maintain nonprofit status, organizations are to focus on their missions. However, sometimes challenging situations arise in which focus must be shifted in order to assure survival. In an interview with the executive director, two main challenges were described:

Base funding is challenging for this venue due to multiple factors. Their building is owned by the Summit County Port Authority and funding from other granting organizations has been restricted due to the changing external economy. The city and county are providing less funds to organizations and their base funding is not connected to a larger organization, such as a university, to help with the finances. (Parr, 30 Sept.)

To address these, he stated:

The main current challenge for the administration is to take advantage of the services the new facilities management organization, SMG, has to offer. SMG is a venue management and marketing and development company that offers resources such as entertainment booking to non-profit theatres and arts centers across the United States. The goal is to get people
in the venue through programming in the building by using a ‘managed risk’ strategy. This strategy focuses on the downside risk model where there is a low amount of risk when booking a show. The venue will not risk money they do not have. They would select a lower costing show, or less popular act, and risk selling low priced tickets as opposed to selecting a blockbuster show for a large amount and risk not selling enough high priced tickets to cover the cost of the production. (Parr, 30 Sept.)

**Branding Goals**

The ACT Overview document stated, “the Civic is a family oriented community venue and without the support of the city, the community, and the philanthropic community the venue would not be able to operate” (2). The main branding goal is to continue to define the organization as a community based venue with a family oriented audience. It is its own entity, no longer a part of the university, and presents commercial productions for the community. In a personal interview, the executive director stated:

Sticking with the mission is a priority but making the venue available for community events, parties, and weddings, when the venue is not presenting shows is also important. The Civic would rather put on more shows than events and the philanthropic community expects shows. [However, mission aside,] depending on the show, ticket sales, and overhead for a production, events generate almost as much revenue as a show [with less preparation and clean up time on their part]. (Parr, 30 Sept.)

In an earlier interview, previous figures about the number of scheduled events were shared:
In the year 2009, the organization had 110 days scheduled with public events. This number does not include rehearsal time, set up, or tear down. A maximum number of 10 percent of these events were hosted by the community. They were in the form of special events, award ceremonies, high school graduations, weddings, private events, and productions such as The Nutcracker and Seussical Jr. (Parr, 5 Nov.)

To rent the venue:

The client calls and the venue works with them to utilize the space. A casual conversation is conducted between the client and venue to organize details for an event. Due to the versatility and grandness of the space, the administration of the venue always suggest that the client visit for a visual understanding of what entertainment could fit the space. (Parr, 30 Sept.)

It is $4,500 to rent the space plus the cost of beverages through the venue. This price does not include food services because catering is not available through the venue. If catering were offered, events such as weddings would be more profitable. Typically, most wedding parties like to plan and book a date anywhere from eight to sixteen months before the event. Blocking out dates this far in advance could conflict with a potential concert or show and is why this type of event is not heavily marketed. (Parr, 30 Sept.)

Goals to Market the Versatile Space

According to the executive director, there was no specific system in place to market the availability of the space. The website had a Rent the Civic tab offering information on who to contact, but no other form of marketing was in place or planned. As stated in the
objectives, increasing the number of events and the public awareness was one of the top priorities. Therefore, marketing the availability of the space through a targeted message would raise public awareness and build the Civic’s brand awareness online.

Another common way nonprofit presenting organizations increase the number of events is through the use of grant funding. The executive director explained that grant funding helps fund community performances through the following process:

The money that comes in through grant funding helps support the loss of capital from community related shows. For example, if a show costs $10,000 and ticket sales only bring in $5,000, grant funding covers the loss of $5,000 for presenting the community sponsored show. Multiply the $5,000 loss by 10 community events a year and you have $50,000 in losses covered by grant funding. Unfortunately, funding has significantly been reduced from federal, state, community foundation and private sources making it a challenge for the organization to maintain its current operation. (Parr, 30 Sept.)

Current Marketing Mix

Elements of the current marketing mix depends on the show or event being advertised. It includes traditional and new marketing tools such as radio spots, print: newspaper and magazine advertisements; electronic: webpage, email newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, TV commercials; outdoor: billboards and messages on the main entrance marquee. For commercial shows a combination of TV, radio, and outdoor marketing tools are used.
Exploration of Online Practices

At the beginning of this project the Civic had a functional website, was starting to use social media, and had the ability to implement and support online video. The website was used as a place for patrons to acquire information about the venue, such as its location, driving directions, upcoming shows, local amenities, and other information needed for patrons seeking a pleasant experience. Seating charts, ticket prices, and a brief history were also included. It featured a 1929 external still shot of the main entrance and two images taken in 2002 of the restoration and expansion project but offered no other current images (see figure 1) (*The Civic*).

Figure 1. Screenshot of Website.

Source: *The Civic.*
Facebook, a social networking site was used to communicate more freely with patrons, also known as “friends.” A friend could create his/her own personal profile, exchange messages with other friends, and join common interest groups such as the page the Civic had created. The Facebook page offered snapshots posted by the organization and others by community members taken at different events. According to the executive director, the organization had over 1,500 friends on their page (Parr, 5 Nov.). This number supported the fact that fresh and dynamic content posted by the organization was in demand by an online audience (see figure 2).

Figure 2. Screenshot of Facebook Page.
Source: “Akron Civic Theatre”.

The Civic’s website and Facebook page did not have any form of video. The photography available on both sites was limited and what was there did not successfully represent the beauty and diversity of the internal space. When searching online for other
images of the venue not posted by the Civic, one found only patron snapshots and amateur videos. These images were not professionally taken and did not successfully represent the culture, values, or brand of the venue. The snapshots did highlight some of the internal space but the videos, which were posted on YouTube, a webbased video site, were not shot with a tripod and had patron conversations throughout.

**Message Development**

Frelinghuysen & Joshi stated that when creating marketing content, one skill to be developed and maintained is to “create emotionally compelling online brand advertising that builds long-term brand affinity” (6). As described by Customer Value, Inc., “brand affinity relates to the authority the brand holds with customers, how well customers identify with the brand and its promise”. The most important, yet challenging, portion of the project was determining the message of the video. My first goal was to highlight an area of growth for the organization, something the audience did not know about and show how it relates to them. My second goal was to select a message that would impact a revenue generating practice. The Civic had multiple messages that could have been conveyed but only one was selected. After analyzing the information from the research and development process it was clear that the main message being communicated to attract patrons was about the diverse programming offered at the theatre. This message was strong and did not need to be reinforced by this project.

Aside from marketing the programs, the second goal of the organization was to increase booking of community events on days the theatre was black, when no musical
acts or shows were scheduled. Creating a message to address this goal was just as important as the programming message but was not being communicated by marketing campaigns. This is the message I selected to tell the story of how the organization is evolving. Not only does ACT bring entertainment to the downtown area through diverse programming, it offers a unique and versatile venue for community uses. It presents large stage productions and cabaret shows but also offers a fun and beautiful space that can be used to hold special events.

Two other messages were considered but not selected. These included a planned giving message and a volunteer orientation message. They were not for several reasons. Although planned giving and donor gifts are sometimes used as main forms of revenue building for this type of arts organization, an online video clearly would not be the best way to deliver this type of sensitive and often personal message to a potential high-end donor. A page on the website touched on the possibility of making substantial gifts, but did not present an aggressive case. Expanding this message was considered, but ultimately it became apparent that this was not the best medium for delivering this message.

The second message, a volunteer orientation video, could have helped to train new volunteers. A large number of volunteers are required to operate an organization of this scale as the revenue generated, either through ticket sales, space rentals, or charitable contributions is insufficient to compensate the essential staff. A core of volunteers perform tasks such as serving as ushers, ticket takers, and providing other much-needed
front of house duties. This message was not selected because one of my goals was to contribute to revenue generation, not to the infrastructure of the organization.

**Style, Tone, and Essence**

The Civic is well established in the community and has created a specific style, tone and essence that its customers value. These characteristics separate it from its competitors and would need to be communicated through the video to properly represent the brand. Characteristics such as the fun family atmosphere and the unique atmospheric beauty of the interior design, refurbished recently to its Gothic/Moroccan splendor create an essence which has played a role in attracting its customers throughout the years. The staff and volunteers also have established a reputation for being accommodating, which sets a welcoming and friendly tone. Through recent customers’ repeated attendance and patronage, public perception and the value of brand equity have improved, making the venue even more valuable to the community.

The executive director wanted the venue to be portrayed in the video as a “fun and happening place” (Parr, 16 Feb.). To emphasize the essence in a way with which the audience would identify, a variety of factors were considered. Elements including using the logo and recognizable images of the venue, and testimonials presented as personal interviews would be used. Other features including the organization’s slogan, “I love this place”!, and website would also be used. The fun and family-friendly atmosphere would be conveyed by selecting the right video footage, dialogue, and music for the piece. For example, the song “Manifest” by local artist, Zach, was selected for its positive, fun, and
uplifting sound. Visual images would showcase the interior as an inviting atmospheric diverse space with the capability to house special events. The essence of the venue would be conveyed by combining all of these features.

**Target Audience**

The target audience was determined by analyzing the primary and secondary data. It consists of current patrons, individuals seeking event space, and organizational leaders. Specifically, the audience would be an adult woman with responsibility for disposable income who is planning an event for a household or organization who has financial authority.

Francois Colbert reported in *Beyond Branding* that “… women make up two-thirds of the market for both high and popular art …” (4). And that, “… while popular art attracts an audience made up of people from all levels of society, cultural organizations must compete amongst themselves to attract a well-educated (and female) customer base that, at most, represents 50 percent of the population and that is also interested in popular art and sports” (4). “… as it is mostly the woman who makes the purchasing decisions for arts and entertainment” (4).

**Online Video Format**

An online video format was selected because this marketing tool has the potential to communicate a message to a larger audience for a longer period of time than traditional direct marketing advertisements. Video creates an audio and visual message which can be
used to improve awareness of an organization and its product. An online video can increase the engagement of the audience, strengthen the brand, and attract site visitors. With this format, the content remains in the public eye longer and is intended to spark curiosity and an emotional response of the viewer.

Each month the number of video views and video viewers seems to increase. Marketing researchers continuously report on the rising number of organizations turning to online video for advertisement and brand management strategies. According to the *State of Video in E-Commerce* report by SundaySky, implementing an online video strategy could lead to success for online brands. The report highlighted that, “nearly eighteen percent of the major search engine result pages contain video results” and “...the number of subscribers to online ... YouTube channels increased by more than twenty percent” (3). In the report’s featured case study, Zappos an e-retailer presented a strong online video strategy “... generated more than $500,000 in annual revenue ...” and “the increase in monthly Zappos traffic accredited to video results amounted to 77,316 visits per month” after deploying the strategy (12).

Two leading digital media companies combined customer data to create research reports about usage trends of online videos. Organizations nationwide use the market-leading online video platform company, Brightcove Inc., to publish and distribute professional digital media advertisements. Brightcove Inc. specializes in video and hosts digital content on its online platform. The second company, TubeMogul, is an online video analytics and advertising platform that processes billions of video streams every month from the Internet’s top publisher sites, video sharing sites, video platforms and
social media sites. It integrates real-time media buying, ad serving, targeting, optimization, and brand measurement to simplify the delivery of video ads. TubeMogul offers information on how online advertisements are being viewed to maximize the impact of every dollar spent by brand marketers. According to joint research by Brightcove and TubeMogul in *Online Video Best Practices*, “media companies ... are not only growing in the number of viewers, but people are watching longer than they have in the past and more videos in a given session” (1). The length of the video was to be longer than a 30 second TV commercial and short enough to hold the viewers attention for the entire piece.

**Made-for-Web Production**

When comparing made-for-web video and television commercials repurposed for online, made-for-web content more effectively persuades its viewers (7). The research shows there to be no one superior production format when comparing repurposed TV spots and made-for-web video content. Repurposing takes a typical TV commercial and places it online. A made-for-web video is a custom creation for online purposes. However, there is a different audience reaction between the two formats. “... repurposed TV spots typically result in higher impact on awareness metrics, while made-for-web video content more [effectively] persuades its viewers”.

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**Broadcast Length**

Brightcove and TubeMogul, Inc. reported in their 2010 quarterly report, *Online Video and the Media Industry* that, “... online video content from broadcast networks attracts the [most] viewing-time [per video] with an average of 2:53 minutes watched per stream” (12). The other forms of online video compared in this report included content from music labels, newspaper publishers, and magazine publishers. Broadcast networks tracked the most overall time watched, which is noted to be relevant to the length of content available on the sites. However, broadcasting views followed newspapers and magazines in their results of viewers who watched an entire video (13). According to the Completion Rate by Category chart, 41.1 percent of viewers completed online video newspaper content, 39 percent completed magazine content, 37.8 percent broadcaster content, and 28.5 percent completed music label content (14).

The Civic consistently pushes online messages to its audience in ways similar to those used by broadcasting organizations. Although the Civic is not a typical broadcast network, it is similar in the sense that messages are sent on a regular basis to inform the audience of up-coming events. The results of the research show a higher rate of response with broadcast video views compared to the other fields and is why the length of the video is not longer than three minutes.

**Online Placement: Discovery and Engagement**

Brightcove and TubeMogul, Inc. also highlighted different ways consumers discovered an online video and evaluated the level of viewer engagement. The majority of videos
were discovered by direct traffic, meaning viewers directly navigated to the source page. The remaining percentage discovered videos through search engines and social media sites such as Google, Yahoo!, Bing, and Facebook (15). Direct traffic made up 51.75 percent of discovery, while “Google [was] the largest external source of traffic with 38.92 percent, ... [followed] by Yahoo! with 5.58 percent, Bing with 2.29 percent, and Facebook with 0.04 percent [of all streaming videos]” (15).

Level of engagement was measured in ‘average minutes watched’ when a viewer was referred by a search engine or social media site. Twitter had the “... highest level of engagement for broadcast networks with 1:52 minutes [of video watched, followed by] Google at 1:38 minutes, Facebook 1:38, Bing 1:37, and Yahoo! 1:22 minutes” (16). This information lead to my recommendations of where an organization could place an online message and what type of discovery and engagement would be expected. My recommendations for the Civic are presented in chapter five.
CHAPTER III

CHALLENGES AND DECISIONS

This chapter discusses details of the development from the pre- to post-production phases of the video project. As stated in the previous chapter, terms of the project were laid out through a series of meetings with the administration of the Civic and agreed upon between both parties. Permission was granted to film in the venue with a small hand-held FlipVideo camera for selected public shows and the individual interviews. Documentation of ownership of the video was agreed upon, giving the Civic rights to distribute the video for promotional use. It also allowed me to use the final product to promote myself and my skills for future projects. A treatment was created to outline the video content, a site survey of the venue was conducted, video equipment test shots were taken, interviews were planned, and finally, the filming was executed and edited into a final product.

Pre-Production

The limited availability of resources, access to equipment, and project budget automatically narrowed the scope of the project. Considering these limitations, it was my decision to shoot footage myself using a small camera with existing light. A single
camera operator can have some benefits in the filming process. Benefits like flexibility and versatility made it possible to bypass the need for additional staff and union workers. In the event set-up would be required for lighting, film, and audio equipment, a union crew would need to be hired. In the future, if a larger budget was available, a crew with lighting, film, and audio equipment would be appropriate.

Filming Restrictions and Equipment

The Civic is a public space and unless otherwise stated by the organization, permission is not needed to film inside the venue. Posting signs to make patrons aware that filming was taking place was considered but decided to be unnecessary due to the community atmosphere of the venue. The message would have indicated that, “anyone who crosses this point will potentially be in a video for the Civic and waives their rights to credits and editing.” To be courteous, patrons were not filmed up close and multiple shots of feet were planned to create movement in the piece. Footage in the final video also avoided use of any clearly recognizable faces.

Filming inside the venue posed many challenges. It was suggested to avoid areas with high traffic, use good lighting, and to plan close up shots to capture good quality and sound. The Civic has cavernous space, limited and mixed lighting, and ambient sounds with an active crowd which made it difficult to control spaces to record comments about the theatre. All individuals that were approached to speak about the venue were verbally briefed about the project and happily gave consent to participate.
A majority of the video footage in the final product was shot with a FlipVideo digital camera (see APPENDIX C) and a tripod. This device captures low-resolution video and audio files and uploads digital data directly to a computer for editing. It was suggested that the use of a high-end camera and equipment was not necessary due to the online nature of the final product. Compared to other digital recording devices on the market, the FlipVideo had two known limitations. The first limitation was the range of the zoom function. When using the zoom to film long shots, the quality of the footage became noticeably pixilated and was unsatisfactory.

The second limitation was connected to the audio recording component. Though the final product is a video, audio quality is just as important and is usually the first thing a viewer notices. The internal microphone of the FlipVideo is designed to pick up sounds surrounding the camera in all directions. Any sound in the environment, whether intentional or unintentional, would be picked up. This meant that in an uncontrolled setting, unintended sounds would be recorded. As a precaution and to compensate for this limitation, a Zoom Handy Recorder, a high-frequency audio recording device (see APPENDIX D), was used to record backup audio. During filming, special attention was paid to the physical environment for any unwanted audible sounds.

Treatment and Test Shots

After the Civic’s information was reviewed, the style and tone communicated, and the message and audience set, the audio and video content was organized into a Treatment (see APPENDIX E). A treatment, which outlines the structure of the piece, was created
and approved before any filming took place. It included three personal interviews, audio to narrate the message, B-roll or internal footage of the venue, and an instrumental soundtrack. To make the video more interesting it was suggested to intermix the interviews and voice throughout the piece so one person was not on screen for an extended period of time. To achieve this, the interviews would be broken down into small segments and mixed throughout the entire piece with audio selections intermixed over changing images of the venue.

A site survey of the venue was conducted to plan for any difficulties that would arise during the actual filming. During a public performance locations were scouted for possible shots and assessed for lighting and level of patron activity. Video test shots were taken with the FlipVideo to check the quality of the equipment and determine if the quality would be acceptable. After evaluating the venue and reviewing the test shots, specific shots were selected and dates were scheduled for future filming.

**Production**

Filming of the internal space took place before, during, and after selected public performances. B-roll footage of the venue was shot during these events while the three personal interviews were scheduled on different dates and filmed in a quiet location inside the venue. To compensate for the challenges related to filming the internal features of the space and the FlipVideo limitations, external community resources were used. These resources contributed to the variety of B-roll footage to be used in the final piece.
The following sections detail the interview process and describe the acquisition and use of the additional visual resources.

**Personal Interviews**

Three individuals were strategically selected to be interviewed due to their roles, relationships, previous experiences, history, and personal connection with the Civic. The messages portrayed by these individuals would link with at least one of the goals for the Civic and the video project. Each individual reflected some element of the message the Executive Director wished to transmit. The content collected was intended to create a compelling response by capturing dialogue and personal feedback. The individuals selected included Jo Ann Salge, a long-time volunteer and recently promoted house manager; Suzie Graham, secretary of the Board of Trustees; and Betty Hook, a long time volunteer and community elder. Each was contacted by telephone and/or email, briefed about the project, and invited to participate. All three agreed to participate the first time they were contacted.

High profile community members, such as the mayor or locally renowned musicians, were considered to be used as spokespeople for the organization but were not ultimately used. There is evidence that showcasing high profile people in online videos has a direct and positive impact on the number of views a message receives. In fact, the message is spread just by their involvement. Although a high volume of viewers is favorable, I wanted to use individuals who had a notable history with the organization and more
personal interactions. These individuals would be able to convey a deeper and stronger emotional connection than the high profile “professional” community members.

In preparation for the interviews, two of the individuals were provided with a copy of the questions via e-mail that would be posed to them, while the third was briefed over the telephone about the content of the questions (see APPENDIX F). At the interview session all three individuals gave written consent for their participation on a media release form (see APPENDIX G) and were asked the same list of questions. They were informed that they had the ability to stop the interview process at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Each was asked to share her thoughts, feelings, and memories about the theatre and respond to questions about her family connections, history, and personal experiences.

The interview sessions were held inside the venue in a controlled and comfortable setting with natural lighting. This type of environment was selected to make the individuals feel comfortable so that their stories could be communicated clearly. Each session lasted approximately twenty minutes and was recorded on the FlipVideo with the Zoom Handy Recorder as a backup audio device. At the conclusion of the session, each was given a thank you letter with my contact information (see APPENDIX H). The following paragraphs highlight the selected individuals and their connections with the Civic which are the main reasons why they were selected for this project.

Jo Ann Salge, House Manager

Jo Ann Salge has been a volunteer for close to thirty years. Due to her dedication and passion for the theatre, she was recently promoted to a house manager position (Salge, 1
June. She was presented The Zenith Award in 2010 for being an outstanding volunteer. Throughout her experience, she formed a strong bond with the venue and become very familiar with its operations. She was selected due to her leadership position with the organization and her previous experiences with the Civic.

Suzie Graham, Secretary, Board of Trustees

Suzie Graham grew up in the Akron community and continues her support for the Civic as the secretary for the Board of Trustees. She has a background in theatre education and a family with two young children. She was the Coordinator for Arts and Children’s Programs for the City of Akron, but is now the President for the Downtown Akron Partnership. She was selected due to her family role and her understanding of the vision of the organization as a board member.

Betty Hook, Volunteer

Betty Hook and her family have volunteered with arts organizations in the area for over thirty-five years. She and her late husband came to the theatre for the first time in 1947 when they were dating and later returned as volunteers (Hook, 20 May). Her daughter and granddaughter have also volunteered on many occasions and continue to do so today. She was selected due to her many years of volunteering experience and knowledge of the variety of events held at the venue.
Community Resources

Earlier in this chapter it was stated that there were challenges connected with filming the internal space of the venue due to the diverse lighting and limitations of the FlipVideo. To compensate for these limitations other sources of visual images were provided from community members. These additional resources were initially unplanned, but proved to be valuable during the post-production phase. Two additional sources contributed film clips and still photographs that were used in the final video. Joe Levack, a local professional photographer, was the first source. He shared over 150 digital still photographs from the Civic’s 81st Cloud Nine Party birthday event and with his permission, eight of his shots were selected and used. The second source was Todd V., producer of the Arts Quest Television Show, a Production of Wasted Talent Media. Todd V. donated internal B-roll footage of the theatre from a previously recorded interview for his show. Six digital video segments were used in the piece. Both sources gave their permission to use the files and are credited at the end of the video.

Post-Production

A creative post-production approach was used by editing the video and audio components together starting with the main video segments then working to include smaller details. First, the master shots and interviews were placed throughout the entire video sequence, followed by medium shots, and then B-roll footage to compliment the interview audio. Video transitions were used to blend the segments together to create a smooth flowing piece. After all of the visual components were in place, the audio levels
of the interview dialogue and voice-over narration were adjusted. Finally, the music was added and levels were adjusted to create the final audio blend. The following section describes the elements and challenges of the post-production process.

Audio and Video Editing

Over sixty minutes of interviews and thirty minutes of B-roll footage were recorded. The interviews, B-roll, and external source files were reviewed and selected in iMovie, a user-friendly Mac video editing software application. Transcripts of each interview were created to distinguish the segments of dialogue, phrases, and candid remarks to be used. The interviews were edited to manageable sizes and B-roll shots were selected to correspond with the dialogue.

After working with iMovie, some editing limitations surfaced, leading me to search for a more advanced video editing software. During the initial editing process, additional resources became available through the Akron Digital Media Center (ADMC), a community organization. This led to the availability of Adobe Premiere Pro 4.0, a real-time, timeline based video editing software with a high-quality output. After completing six workshops through the ADMC citizen journalist workshop series, I was offered access to the Premiere Pro software. The six workshops dealt with storytelling, photography and video, lighting, video editing, placing online content, tagging meta-data, and marketing through online sources. Converting the original iMovie files into more complex Adobe Premier Pro 4.0 files created initial challenges but the effort that went into learning the greater program was invaluable.
Video transitions were added to create a smooth flowing message. Cross-fade transitions, or dissolves, were used to blend one image into the next. The FlipVideo audio files did not produce good quality tracks. They contained room noise, also known as presence, which greatly detracted from the interview dialogue. It was recommended to either re-record selected interview segments or use better audio files. Fortunately, the high-definition back up files from the Zoom Handy Recorder were suitable. To produce the best sound quality these files were exported and adjusted in Adobe Soundbooth, a digital audio editor. These new audio files were then synched with the original FlipVideo footage in Premier Pro, which has the ability to manipulate audio and visual files separately. This function made it easy to mute the original audio and replace it with the higher quality files.

Finally, after combining the visual images and interview audio, a music soundtrack, was edited into the piece. A song titled “Manifest” was donated by a local artist as a complete soundtrack without lyrics. The audio levels of both the dialogue and music were then adjusted so the interview dialogue could be heard over the music. It was suggested that anytime music is included in a piece such as this, it can detract from the interviews. However, in this case the music was donated as a whole song to be used as a soundtrack. The musician was not given the parameters to create an entirely new soundtrack specifically for this piece. Given the budget limitations, the video was produced with available resources at little to no cost. When creating future videos, a unique soundtrack could be created for the piece which would allow the dynamics of the music and
interviews to compliment each other. If used, this method would create a greater emotional effect for the audience.

Managing Digital Files

Video files tend to be large and take up a lot of hard-drive space on a computer. After filming took place, there were initial challenges with backing up the raw video footage to my computer’s hard drive and the proper amount of scratch disk space needed to edit the content. The computer did not have enough space available to store the information and make edits. This challenge was resolved by transferring files to an external hard drive which was also used to back up the video files for the project. It is common practice to duplicate and store files in a second and third location to ensure raw data and versions of projects are secure. As a precaution, this practice was used throughout the production and post-production phase. In case something happened to the computer, external hard drive, or third digital location where the files were stored, the latest version of the project would be retrievable from one of the other locations.

Video Refinement

After several internal revisions a final version was created and sent to the Civic for review. The executive director confirmed that the objectives of the project were successfully met and that no further adjustments needed to be made. Several copies of the video were made into DVDs with unique labels (see APPENDIX I) which were burned and distributed to the executive director and head house manager/volunteer coordinator.
for distribution. Two types of DVDs were created. The first contained a .mov, or movie file, and a .3gp, or digital device format. The second contained a file that could be played in any DVD player or computer DVD player. The executive director was given one copy of each DVD for the Civic’s records with a page of recommendations for optimal online placement and response. All of the contributors, including the interviewees, musician, and external community sources were provided their own copy of the video which contained the DVD file for their own use.
CHAPTER IV

PRODUCT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The end product, a two minute, thirty second video, highlights the diverse space of the Akron Civic Theatre and reminds those who have experienced the venue in the past that there is more to it than just a beautiful theatre. It informs the audience and those who have never been to the venue that other opportunities exist. The content of the video includes commentary from interviews, venue footage, still photography, individuals and patrons charasmatically conveying the slogan, “I love this place”!, and the organization’s logo and web address. The commentary highlights features of the venue and describes how people can use the space in a variety of ways. The video ends with a call to action, an invitation for viewers to visit the space. It also encourages them to find out more and to make their own experience. This chapter includes the transcript of the video and my recommended steps to release it online for the best viewer response.

Video Transcript

Logo: THE CIVIC “I love this place”!
Three patrons: “I love this place”!
**Suzie Graham (SG):** “I love this place”!

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Betty Hook (BH): “I love this place”!

SG: People love the Civic because, first of all, they have the initial reaction. You walk in the doors and it’s unbelievably beautiful. And it’s exotic and quirky and strange. So there are parts of the decor and the ambiance here that appeals to someone who likes very dark and gothic things, it has that. It is all those things at the same time simultaneously dark, simultaneously gothic, simultaneously vibrant and moroccan. So I think there is something here, physically, that appeals to everyone.

BH: It’s such a beautiful place. It’s unique. There’s no place else you could go to have the atmosphere that you would get here.

Jo Ann Salge (JS): We’re just growing with the community and what they want and need.

SG: They make different use of different space inside the theatre itself. And then there are also different community events that take place in the theatre. So sometimes it’s not used as a stage, in a traditional sense, but it’s used to house an event that supports a community organization.

JS: You’ve got musicals you’ve got drama, weddings, cabarets, graduations.

BH: They have these shows for the school children.

JS: Dance reviews.

SG: The people here are very accessible. It’s easy to speak with them about arranging, you know, making plans if you have a vision for something. They really work hard to make that happen. Typically sometimes it may seems intimidating to try to go into a theatre space, an established professional theatre, to try to get something accomplished where there are lots of really cool and exciting ways that you could do things differently that aren’t part of the traditional gamit that a professional theatre might run.

JS: I first came here in the 70’s. Brought my kids to one haunted house, here. And a circus. And I looked at it and thought, an elephant on stage, no way.

BH: It’s impressive to people, all ages.

SG: It’s just a great space. Everything feels neat, you know, the texture of the seat cushions.
JS: And the stars twinkle.
BH: This is what makes it fun down here.
JS: But you got family and that’s what it’s all about.
SG: I think that’s why people love it, is because everyone feels at home here.
JS: Magic happens here. You have to find out yourself and experience.

Website: akroncivic.com

Music: Manifest by Zach
zachmusic.net

Select photography: Joe Levack
Select footage: Arts Quest Television Show
a Production of Wasted Talent Media
Produced and edited by: Courtney T. Cable
Logo: THE CIVIC “I love this place”!

**Recommended Steps for Online Release**

To strategically position the video for optimal viewer response, I provided the executive director and media relations director with recommended steps to place the video online. These steps link available online resources with some of the current marketing practices of the Civic. It is the responsibility of the organization to decide the way the video will be released and used but as a precaution, if the video is not positioned properly, there is potential to have a low viewer response. Foremost, I recommend that the video be connected with a marketing campaign and that the organization complete the following steps to achieve the greatest response from the targeted audience.
1. Tag the suggested subject keywords or phrases in the metadata
2. Post the video on YouTube for the ability to track the number of viewers
3. Link the video on the Civic’s social media sites, such as Facebook
4. Link the video to the Civic’s email newsletter for digital distribution
5. Post a news or announcement release on related organizational pages

A title, description, and website will need to be provided to post the video on YouTube.

Consider using the following details:

Title: The Akron Civic Theatre, I love this place!
Description: The Akron Civic Theatre, located downtown Akron, Ohio, is not just your average local theatre. It is a historical atmospheric theatre with a fun, family-friendly vibe. See for yourself why people love this place!
Website: <www.akroncivic.com>

Every video is provided with a unique uniform resource locator (URL) that can be used for sharing options. Use this link below to view the video.

Sharing option URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTNdjHT6IBg>

_Metadata Tagging_

Metadata is the information that describes an online component such as a video, article, or photograph. It is data about data. In this case, it is information about the marketing video. Metadata allows Internet users to search for tags, or keywords, related to the subject of the piece. The following keywords or phrases are recommended tags.

Akron, Arts administration, atmospheric theatre, branding, City of Akron, community events, downtown, historical building, historical theatre, I love this place, Lowe’s
Theatre, Mainstreet, Manifest, nonprofit arts organization, Ohio, rust belt, The Akron Civic Theatre, urban development, venue, video marketing, Zach

The following listed organizations and websites are connected with the Civic and would be appropriate locations to submit a news release or announcement with a link to the video. Having this type of extended presence can help spread the message to other networks of people and potential add to the number of online viewers.

1. Akron and Summit County Convention & Visitors Bureau
   <www.visitakron-summit.org>
2. City of Akron <http://www.ci.akron.oh.us>
3. Downtown Akron Partnership <www.downtownakron.com>
4. The Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce <www.greaterakronchamber.org>
5. The Summit County Historical Society of Akron, Ohio
   <http://summithistory.org>

Finally, the following list includes news and arts entertainment organizations that would consider posting the video on their site.

1. CoolCleveland.com <events@coolcleveland.com>
2. Akron Life <www.akronlife.com>
3. Northeast Ohio Performing Arts List (NE Ohio Pal)
   <list.neohiopal.org/listinfo.cgi/neohiopal-neohiopal.org>
4. The 330 <www.ohio.com>
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This practical thesis demonstrates how an online marketing video can be developed to benefit a nonprofit arts organization in its current position. It highlights research that shows that a growing number of organizations are communicating messages through online videos and that consumers are positively reacting to this information. The goals of my marketing video were to sell the organization, its values and culture, build online brand awareness, drive customers to the website, and inform purchase intent. These were accomplished by tailoring a message based on the marketing and branding goals of the Akron Civic Theatre as communicated by the administration and Board of Trustees.

The video is comprehensive, in a short concise format, and uses dialogue of personal interviews and images unique to the Civic to tell how the story is evolving. The message communicates that the organization has a versatile space that can be used by the community for purposes other than programmatic entertainment and showcases the family-oriented values and community focused culture.

The purpose of this project is to show the importance a made-for-web media online marketing video has on persuading its viewers. As marketing practices evolve to more
integrated cross-platform campaigns, which include online and traditional offline marketing practices, arts administrators need to be aware of the potential impact these practices have on its own audience development. Messages can be communicated to target audiences in various ways and since online practices are simultaneously being developed and explored by marketers and Internet users, the use of video as a main medium has not been established as a normal practice. As the research shows, a growing number of consumers are going online to make their purchasing decisions. And as more organizations use online video as a marketing tool to connect with their consumers, more research will be collected and used, leading to future trends in advertising applications.

**Unexpected Happenings**

Community resources contributed knowledge to this project which were both helpful and unexpected. The information that was shared directly linked to the needs of the project and my knowledge as a single-camera operator and producer. These resources included a local librarian, connections I made during my time as an intern, a professional photographer and videographer, and contacts through the Akron Digital Media Center. These people provided information that played a notable role during post-production and were more than willing to share knowledge, resources, and images with me for this project.
Observed Online Practices

Throughout the length of the project, I observed an increase in online patronage for the Civic. This was measured by the number of friends and likes on the Civic’s Facebook page. I also observed that an increase of professional images and videos were posted by the Civic. Images that were available on the website remained unchanged. However, a growing number of videos and pictures from events were posted on the organization’s Facebook page. Its social network had grown from 1,500 to over 4,800 friends (“Akron Civic Theatre”) who were able to view the Facebook page which included any and all pictures and videos on the site. The Civic’s Facebook People page maxed out its subscription leading the administrator to create a separate Page and a Group. Each of these spaces has a slightly different purpose with limits the audience can interact. Further details describing the added capabilities and limitations will not be described in this project. The People page had over 4,800 friends (“Akron Civic Theatre”), the Page had over 3,100 ‘likes’ (“Akron Civic Theatre: Non-Profit Organization”), and the Group had over 195 members (“We Love the Akron Civic Theatre: Open Group”).

By utilizing the Civic’s Facebook page the video can be shared by friends and networks associated with the organization. These friends and people who make up the networks have the ability to share a link with their friends and family by posting it on their own pages. This is one way a message can be passed to an online audience. However, one challenge remains for online branding and marketing. There are many tools available to communicate a message. There are also challenges associated with creating and posting online video content. Without direct access to a knowledgable videographer,
projects of this nature could be limited or become expensive. This means it could be a one time project or would limit the possibility for future videos.

If budget and time limitations restrict video projects, the organization should consider seeking local resources that fill this need. One resource available in Akron, Ohio is Akron Buzz, <www.akronbuzz.com>. Akron Buzz is an organization in place to serve the community. They seek nonprofit, community organizations, and issues in Akron that could benefit from video coverage. They use video production students from area schools and colleges to produce videos. Knowing that this organization exists in a small Rust Belt city reinforces the idea that resources are available to fulfill video needs for nonprofit arts organizations throughout America.

**Future Opportunities**

The Akron Civic Theatre can use this video beyond its original online intent by presenting it in different ways. For example, it could be given to members of The Board of Trustees to be used for fundraising purposes or shown at a volunteer orientation. It could be shared with other organizations to promote its message to outside networks such as local radio or television stations, colleges, and university news systems. However, if current marketing statistics continue to show an increase in the number of videos being viewed by online consumers, in the future there will be an increase in the number of videos being created by organizations to strategically communicate their message to attract and influence consumers. By creating this video and providing recommendations to the Civic for online placement, this organization is on the forefront of online marketing
and branding. It is my hope that other nonprofit arts organizations continue to produce quality made-for-web content to communicate their brand messages to online audiences.
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They were used during the 2008-2009 fiscal year, primarily as a way of communicating our strategic direction to community leadership and funding sources.

Yes yes yes!

Could you tell me what these documents were used for and the date? (Ex. Fiscal year 2009-10 would be fine.)

Great!

On 10/19/10 10:24 AM, "Howard Parr" <hparr@akroncivic.com> wrote:

This one might be better.
APPENDIX B. THE AKRON CIVIC THEATRE OVERVIEW

The Akron Civic Theatre serves as the region’s primary venue for community-based arts and entertainment events. The facility is held in extremely high regard by the general public (many of whom have deep emotional ties to the building) and it’s appeal crosses racial and economic boundaries. Like the Library and the Zoo, the Civic is perceived as an important community asset by a broad cross-section of the public. More than 100,000 people visit The Civic annually, nearly half (48,000) under the age of 18.

Since 2000, the community has invested more than $30 million in the Civic to support its renovation and operations. The theater serves as an anchor for the development of the Lock 3 block of Main Street and its presence and operation facilitated, along with the City of Akron, the launch and increasing success of Lock 3 Park, and the ongoing development at Lock 4.

The Civic has operated with consistent professional management since 1997, when an agreement was signed with the University of Akron. While market conditions necessitated the termination of that agreement, substantial progress was made during that period with regard to consistency of program and operation. A review of the work of that period makes it clear that while earned and contributed revenue directly associated with rental and in-house events at the Civic are sufficient to support its programming, they are not sufficient to fund the basic operating costs of the building itself.

The Board of Trustees, along with management staff, developed a programming and operational model for the theater that will achieve the following objectives:

• An increase in the number of events at the building, and increased public awareness of those events.

• A reduction in personnel and other operating costs.

• An increase in revenue from ticket sales, rental fees, concessions, special events, and public (city, county, state) and private sector (individuals, foundations, corporations) support.
• Increased participation by the Board of Trustees in facilitating community partnerships designed to produce more events and revenue.

These objectives will be achieved by:

• Maintaining relationships with and providing excellent service to current rental clients.

• Managing risk associated with in-house programming offered by the Civic and designed to keep the building active on dates when no rental events are scheduled.

• Developing a relationship with regional and/or national entities involved in programming theaters the size and nature of the Civic.

• Expansion of the number of members on the current Board of Trustees by six to eight during the next year.

Operating pro-forma for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 have been created. The projections, which are based on historical financial data adjusted for operational and programming policy decisions made by the Board of Trustees, present the Civic as sustainable in its operations and programming through a combination of earned and contributed income as follows:

• Earned Income (to support programming and operations) – 47%
• Contributed Income (to support programming and operations) – 21%
• City of Akron Income (to support Lock 3) – 32%

To date, more than 80 events are planned for 2008-2009, with additional programming expected. It is anticipated that a partnership with an external programming entity will add events during the later part of 2008-2009 and throughout 2009-2010.

The Civic staff includes five full-time positions (executive director, technical director, associate director, volunteer coordinator/house manager and accounting/concessions manager.) Two box office managers work full-time on a ten-month contract. There are three permanent part-time positions (assistant technical director, office manager, and receptionist.) Contract staff is employed to oversee finance, communications, Board development, and various other areas of the theater’s operations. More than 100 volunteers serve as ushers and ticket takers, and provide other much-needed front of house duties.
Conclusion

Achieving a maximum return on the community’s investment in the Akron Civic Theatre is contingent on establishing and maintaining partnerships that bring the necessary financial, human and programmatic resources to bear. In seeking to develop these partnerships, the Board of Trustees acknowledges the fundamental reality that a base level of public funding is needed in order to maintain and operate the theater’s physical plant. It further acknowledges that it does not have the necessary risk capital or expertise to program national attractions, and that a programming partnership with an external entity is the most efficient and effective way for the theatre to offer such programming. The Board acknowledges that the Civic is a community-based venue, and that the facility must be made affordably available to community-based arts groups seeking a performance space. Finally, the Board of Trustees acknowledges the need for increased philanthropic support in the community and is committed to expanding and developing its membership in order to facilitate that increase.
APPENDIX C. FLIPVIDEO CAMERA
APPENDIX D. ZOOM HANDY RECORDER
APPENDIX E. TREATMENT

Message: The Civic Theatre is growing as a venue. The versatile space can be used in many ways. The staff is friendly which creates a fun setting and they are easy to work with. Many people love this place. You will have to see for yourself why you love this place.

Introduction: Music (Manifest)

- Interview of Jo Ann Salge (Audio & some visual)
  - Evolving as a venue, ‘growing’, weddings, cabaret …
    - B-roll shots while interview is rolling
      - Catering shots
      - Cabaret set up
      - Drums – w/ credit line
      - (Elephant on stage)

Body: Interview of Suzie Graham (Audio & some visual)

- People love this place b/c of initial reaction. It’s exotic, strange, dark & gothic …
- Staff is friendly and easy to work with
  - B-roll shots while interview audio is rolling
    - Feet walking in
    - Ticket taking
    - Grand lobby
    - White woman sculpture

Conclusion: Interview of Betty Hook (Audio & some visual)

- “There are so many different things. It’s impressive to people of all ages.”
  - B-roll shots while interview audio is rolling
    - Space has integrity - interior design remaining the same
    - Feet with white tights
    - “I love this place”!
· Jo Ann Salge
  o “You’ll have to find out yourself and experience why you love this place.”
    ▪ Close with B-roll shots of internal space

Music ends (Manifest)
APPENDIX F. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your very first experience with this theatre?
   a. Who was with you?
   b. What was your impression of the space?
   c. Had you had an experience like this before?

2. Tell me about your fondest memory of the theatre?
   a. What made it so special?
   b. Can you share some of the vivid details?

3. How has the theatre experience changed since your first visit?
   a. How has the downtown atmosphere influenced this change?
   b. What type of audience is being attracted?

4. What is your role or relationship now with the Civic?
   a. How did you get into this role?
   b. How long have you played this part?

5. How is the Civic evolving as a venue?
   a. What would you say about the venue to attract someone who is looking to host an event?
   b. What are some of the best qualities of the Civic?
   c. Describe how some events have utilized the diverse space.

6. Through your observation, why do people ‘love this place’?

7. “I love this place”!
APPENDIX G. MEDIA RELEASE FORM

Media Release Form

I authorize Courtney T. Cable to record my name, voice and likeness on videotapes, audiotapes, photographs, CDs, DVDs, video clips and/or web-based materials (media), for marketing materials used to promote the Civic Theatre, The University of Akron, and/or Ms. Cable. In addition, I give Ms. Cable permission to view, use, and edit such media. I waive all rights to inspect and/or approve the media and any copy that Ms. Cable may use in conjunction with the media and the uses to which they may be applied: including use in an online marketing video for the Civic Theatre and publications, documents, videos and/or presentations to promote the Civic Theatre, The University of Akron, and/or Ms. Cable.

I understand that Ms. Cable may use the media, in whole, in part, or in composite for those uses listed above.

I understand that Ms. Cable owns all rights to the aforementioned media for the uses listed above. I waive all rights in the media and release Ms. Cable from any loss, damage, and/or liability arising out of my appearance on such media.

______________________________________ ______________________________
Signature      Date

______________________________________ ______________________________
Print Name      e-mail address
APPENDIX H. PARTICIPANT THANK YOU NOTE

Thank you for your participation!

You have agreed to have your voice and likeness recorded on video clips to be used in marketing materials for the Civic Theatre. This thesis project is in collaboration with The University of Akron and The Akron Civic Theatre. By agreeing to participate you may appear in an online promotional video, publications, documents, and/or presentations to promote the theatre, The University of Akron, or Ms. Cable.

Thank you again for your enthusiasm towards this project.

If you have any further inquiries please contact the principal investigator of the project, Courtney Cable, at ctc13@uakron.edu.
APPENDIX I. DVD LABEL

THE CIVIC THEATRE
A DIGITAL PRESENCE
Produced and edited by
Courtney T. Cable (cct313@uakron.edu)
Music: Manifest by Zach (zachmusic.net)

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APPENDIX J. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FORM

IRB Registration Form

[Form fields filled with information]

Registration Form

Please complete this form if you propose to conduct a project that involves interaction, observation, and/or collection of information from individuals that meets one or more of the criteria below for IRB approval.

☐ The project does not meet the common definition of research.
☐ The project does not collect information "about" the individuals with whom the researcher interacts.
☐ Results will be shared only with the client or stakeholder(s) for private use or for evaluation of an established program or for other non-research purposes.
☐ The project utilizes only data from secondary sources that are not individually identifiable.
☐ The project is an internal evaluation intended for quality control of an ongoing program only.
☐ The project involves only oral history activities, such as open-ended interviews, that ONLY document a specific event or the experiences of individuals without intent to draw conclusions, generalize findings, or influence policy or practice.

Project Title: The Civic Theatre: a digital online presence

Principal Investigator (PI): Courtney Gable

PI Email: gable.31@ohio.edu

PI Phone: 330-972-7607

Co-Investigators (not all co-investigators listed):

Advisory Board (if applicable): Professor Sandy Pope

Provide below a brief description of the purpose of this study and the type and source of the information on individuals that you will use.

The purpose of this project is to gather short open-ended interviews from people who have previously and recently experienced the Civic Theatre in downtown Akron, Ohio. The interviews will be digitally recorded on a video camera and edited to be used for a marketing video for the venue. Selected individuals will be asked to recall their memories of the venue, express their views of the venue, and comment on how they have benefited from the venue changing in its current environment.
A second group of selected individuals will be asked to repeat the phrase, "I love this place," in their own personal style while being recorded.

The interview sessions will be short in length and take about 15 minutes or less for each selected individual. The individuals repeating the phrase will only be needed for a short moment less than five minutes in length.

Investigator's Assurance

I certify that the information provided in this registration form is complete and accurate. I understand that as Principal Investigator, I am fully responsible for the ethical conduct of this project.

Principal Investigator: [Signature] Date: [Signature]

Faculty Advisor's Assurance

I certify that the student is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing the research and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study.

Faculty Advisor: [Signature] Date: [Signature]

Please submit this form to the IRB, 16 ORSEP, 2B4 Pulawy, 44325-2162.